



CHADD's
National
Resource
Center
on ADHD

ADHD Quick Facts

ADHD & Stress: Information for Parents

Youth with ADHD often have more stress than their peers without ADHD due to the symptoms they live with. Disruptions in daily routines can add to stress as well.

Stress is an emotional response to difficult circumstances. It can cause both psychological (anxiety and depression) as well as physical (headaches, stomach aches) symptoms. Added [stress can increase ADHD symptoms](#) and can affect how a child learns, how well they can focus and how they behave.

As children grow to become young adults, they need to take charge of their own stress management, step by step. Youth with ADHD might take longer than other youth in learning how to manage their lives and need extra support. Parents can encourage their youth with ADHD to take steps to reduce the effects of stress on their lives.

Provide these tips for your child and help them brainstorm how to do them:

- *Create a routine.* Stick to a routine by going to sleep at the same time nightly and get up at the same time every morning.
- *Exercise.* Plan time in your day to exercise. Even a short walk can improve mood and focus.
- *Sleep.* Plan enough time for sleep—your brain is still growing and needs 8-10 hours. Develop a regular bedtime—sleeping long on the weekend doesn't make up for lost time. Keep all screens out of the bedroom at night.
- *Breathe.* When you are feeling stressed, stop what you are doing. Take 10 deep breaths.
- *Listen.* Listening to music can also help alleviate the effects of stress.
- *Journal.* Write down your thoughts, worries, or list of things you need to do.



Resources To Manage Children's Stress

- [Ask the Expert Webinar: Mindfulness, Stress, & Emotion](#)
- Ask the Expert Webinars: Helping Kids with ADHD/LD Overcome Chronic Stress
 - [Part 1](#)
 - [Part 2](#)
- [Article: ADHD and Family Stress](#)
- [Article: The ReThinkStress Program](#)



Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)
4221 Forbes Blvd, Suite 270
Lanham, MD 20706
www.CHADD.org | 301-306-7070

- *Develop acceptance.* Work to accept that things can and do go wrong. The key is to not blame yourself when things do not go as planned because of ADHD symptoms. ADHD is not your fault, your responsibility is doing the best you can with what you are given—you can learn to manage ADHD symptoms but it's a lifelong process.
- *Eat healthy.* Reduce your intake of sugar and caffeine. Be aware of what you eat and make sure you consume your daily recommended intake of fruits and vegetables.
- *Increase awareness.* Along with deep breathing, a [mindfulness or awareness practice](#) can help you recognize when you are feeling stressed and help reduce these effects on your mind and body.
- *Set limits.* Be aware of how much time you spend on social media or video gaming. Think about how it makes you feel. Limit time spent on devices and increase the amount of time you spend outside or exercising.
- *Ask for help.* Don't be afraid to ask for help when you are feeling stressed or overwhelmed. Talk with a trusted friend, parent, relative, or teacher.



Additional Steps for Parents/Caregivers:

- *Support.* Make sure that your child is being supported especially if they have moved to online learning. Reach out to your child's teachers, principal, or other school support personnel for assistance. Children with ADHD are entitled to [504 accommodations](#) if they don't qualify for individual education plans.
- *Parent Training.* For help in dealing with your child's ADHD symptoms including behavior issues, [parent training](#) has been shown to improve family functioning and child behavior.
- *Routine.* Develop and stick to a routine. For children with ADHD, knowing what to expect on any given day will help alleviate feelings of anxiety.
- *Healthy habits.* Families can support one another by preparing healthy meals and exercising together. Parents can model good sleep habits.
- *Knowledge.* Learn all you can about ADHD and how it affects your child. Help them to identify the ways in which ADHD affects them.
- *Treatment.* Make sure that your child is continuing their ADHD treatment plan especially during times of heightened stress.
- *Supervision.* Pay close attention to when your child is feeling overwhelmed and try to anticipate and plan for situations that might be stressful for them.
- *Help.* If you are feeling stressed or overwhelmed while caring for your child with ADHD, reach out to trusted friends, family members, or [join an in-person](#) or [online support](#) group.

